

VI. Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning

Local Capability Assessment

Homeland Security and Emergency Management has been actively working with Regional Planning Commissions and local communities to develop local mitigation plans and identify cost-effective mitigation measures. Most notably, the State recently adopted NH Revised Statutes Annotated - RSA 674:2, which states that a Master Plan adopted under this statute may include a “natural hazards section which documents the physical characteristics, severity, frequency, and extent of any potential natural hazards to the community. It should identify those elements of the built environment at risk from natural hazards as well as extent of current and future vulnerability that may result from current zoning and development policies.”

Summary of Local Capability Assessment

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans submitted to the Homeland Security and Emergency Management include their own individual local capability assessments. These local assessments include a review of the effectiveness of each community’s programs by the local hazard mitigation committees. Homeland Security and Emergency Management provides technical assistance and recommendations for improving a given community’s programs. Local towns and cities, however, are not required by law to implement the state’s recommendations.

The following list provides an overview of programs and regulations for most of the communities in New Hampshire. The overall effectiveness of these programs is assessed at the local level in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. HSEM reviews the local plan and has determined that all of these programs are adequate to excellent in quality. The individual assessment by the local plans identify whether or not they need improvement. If a problem is identified HSEM will provide technical assistance to those individual communities.

Emergency Operation Plan
Building Code
Floodplain Ordinance
Elevation Certificates
Community Rating System
Emergency Warning System
Subdivision Regulations
Site Plan Regulations
Road Design Standards
Bridge Design Standards
Bridge Maintenance Program

Storm Drain/ Culvert Maintenance
Aquifer Protection District
Shoreland Protection Program
Hazardous Materials Plan/Team
Public Education Programs
Master Plan
Wetland Conservation District
Capital Improvement Program
Emergency Back-up Power
Mitigation Grants

State Assistance for Local Plan Development

Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM), Planning Section, provides technical assistance to Regional Planning Commissions and local communities that request support in the development of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans. HSEM staff offers assistance in the planning section, distributing the “Hazard Mitigation Planning Guide for New Hampshire Communities (2003)” document both in paper and digital format, and mitigation planning brochures offered through FEMA. However, since 2001 HSEM has largely relied upon the nine Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) to facilitate and develop hazard mitigation plans for local communities. Most communities in New Hampshire do not have the staff and resources available to develop a Plan. The RPCs have been trained over the years by HSEM and FEMA and have the experience and expertise to assist in the development of local Plans.

The State Hazard Mitigation Officer, the NFIP Coordinator, the Office of Energy & Planning and the Regional Planning Commissions work with local governments by providing the following:

- Model zoning ordinances.
- Local hazard mitigation planning guidance and assistance.
- Local mitigation planning workshops.
- Sharing examples of good mitigation planning methods and products that have been approved by FEMA.
- Assistance in the identification of cost-effective and environmentally sound mitigation projects.
- Natural hazard, demographic and economic data for communities to use in their local plans.
- Vulnerability assessment and loss estimation modeling data, as well as benefit-cost analysis guidance.
- Workshops on Mitigation Project Identification & Development.

Funding for planning assistance is provided by grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These include annual planning grants through the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program, Emergency Management Planning Grants (EMGP) and the Pre Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grants. The RPC planning initiative mentioned above is funded completely by the PDM grant program.

Summary of Funding Sources for Local Mitigation		
Funding Source	Eligible Projects	Agency
Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)	Build state and local emergency management capability, and serve as the foundation for first responder activities.	Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)
Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant (PDM)	Implementing cost-effective hazard mitigation activities that complement a comprehensive mitigation program.	HSEM
Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant (FMA)	Implementing measures to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insurable under the NFIP.	HSEM
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program	Structural Mitigation Projects due to a Presidential Disaster Declaration.	Department of Homeland Security and HSEM
FEMA Supplemental Funding	Funding assistance to update all-hazards Emergency Operations Plans, with an emphasis on WMD.	Department of Homeland Security and HSEM
Citizen Corp	To support the formation of state and local Citizen Corps Councils to help drive local citizen participation by coordinating Citizen Corps programs.	Department of Homeland Security and HSEM
School Emergency Response and Crisis Management Plan Discretionary Grant Program	To provide school districts with funds to strengthen and improve current school crisis plans in preparation for emergencies including potential terrorist attacks.	Department of Education

Review Process of Local Plans and Projects

Plan Review

All plans completed by the Regional Planning Commissions and other independent consultants, regardless of funding sources, are submitted to HSEM. The State Hazard Mitigation Officer reviews each plan using the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Review Crosswalk developed by FEMA. This review is completed within 30 days then sent to FEMA Region 1 for review. If FEMA has comments on a plan, they send their comments to HSEM and the community. Once revisions are made and approved by FEMA the community will formally approve and adopt the Plan.

As the HSEM Planning Section staff reviews local Hazard Mitigation Plans, information that is applicable to a regional or state level of planning will be collected and available within 60 days for inclusion to future revisions of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan. Likewise, Sections of the State Plan is posted on HSEM website for local communities, Regional Planning Commissions, and the general public to incorporate into their Local Hazard Mitigation Plans.

Project Review

The SHMO is responsible for project management and record keeping, including project files that contain all correspondence, applications, vouchers, reports, receipts, and related documentation. HSEM support staff will assist in the preparation of the state/local grant agreement, all correspondence and project files. Quarterly progress reports will be submitted to FEMA by the SHMO based on the reports provided by the Applicant's Agent. A final report will also be required from each applicant, and closeout documents will be submitted to FEMA by the SHMO.

Mitigation Project Closeout procedures required by the communities include the following:

- A. The sub-grantee shall submit closeout information in the form of a final report on work done, expenditures, and other costs.
- B. Project closeout will be noted in the project files.
- C. Final payment shall be made along with a closeout letter.

Prioritization of Local Planning & Projects

Mitigation Planning is a high priority for the Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM). Consequently, HSEM allocated the 2004/05 PDM grant money to the Regional Planning Commissions (RPC). The RPCs complete the majority of mitigation plans within the State and select communities based on population, hazard risk, and a community's interest and involvement in mitigation. HSEM also provides direct technical assistance to communities that develop plans on their own. Lastly, several communities a year will apply for and receive EMPG grants. These towns typically contract independent consultants to develop mitigation plans.

Prioritization of mitigation projects typically fall under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). In the 2005 fiscal year, FEMA approved two PDM project applications submitted by towns or cities in New Hampshire. Since the FY-2005 PDM program, the State of New Hampshire has had at least ten communities apply annually for the PDM grant. All PDM project applications submitted to the State, will also be reviewed under the following HMGP requirements described below:

1. Project Review Process:

- The State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) will review all applications for completeness and to ensure they meet state and federal eligibility criteria.
- A Cost Benefit Review will be conducted on all projects submitted utilizing FEMA BCA software.
- The Hazard Mitigation Grant Review Committee will review and make funding recommendations on the applications. This is to be based on communities with the highest risk and the greatest pressures caused by development.
- The SHMO will provide the Director of HSEM, in prioritized order, those grant applications recommended for FEMA approval by the Mitigation Grant Review Committee.
- The Director of HSEM will forward applications to FEMA for funding approval.

2. Project Ranking Process and Criteria:

The Mitigation Grant Review Committee will rank all eligible projects. Ranking will include consideration based on meeting the following:

- a. Objectives and criteria within the State Hazard Mitigation Plan
- b. Federal and state criteria as outlined earlier in this document
- c. 44 CFR Section 206.435 (b)
- d. Membership in the National Flood Insurance Program
- e. FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan
- f. Communities with the highest level of risk
- g. Repetitive Loss Property
- h. Communities feeling the highest pressures caused by development
- i. Available funding

Applicants will be formally notified of the results of the Committee's ranking and reviewing process, and of their recommended or non-recommended status by the SHMO. Applicants not being recommended for funding may appeal the Committee's decision under specific criteria.

3. Selection of Projects:

The SHMO will submit to the Director of HSEM those projects that have been

reviewed and ranked by the Mitigation Grant Review Committee, and are recommended for submission to FEMA for final approval and funding. Applicants will be notified by the Director's office if the application has been approved for forwarding to FEMA.

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